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RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 1280
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 009710

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: FATA OPERATIONS SINCE JULY 7TH: A MIXED BAG

REF: A. (A) ISLAMABAD 008541
[1](#)B. (B) ISLAMABAD 03985
[1](#)C. (C) PESHAWAR 0122
[1](#)D. (D) PESHAWAR 00498

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) This is the second in a series of four cables assessing the GOP's progress in its crackdown on extremism.

[1](#)2. (S) Summary. In the aftermath of the July 7, 2005 bombings in London, President Musharraf made a series of broad-reaching commitments to tackle extremism and terrorism in Pakistan. One commitment was to stabilize the troubled border regions known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) through an integrated strategy combining increased military operations with stronger political administration and economic development. Implementation of the overall plan has been slow. The report card for military operations is mixed, law and order in both North and South Waziristan continue to deteriorate, despite a hefty troop presence and increased patrols in the region. The government appears to be pursuing FATA stabilization and development with new vigor since March 2006 (ref A); actual progress will require sustained political will to carry out change and better management of the strategy, both of which are in abundance at present. End summary.

Expanded Operations, Uneven Execution

[1](#)3. (C) At the direction of President Musharraf and the Director General Military Operations (DGMO), the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps expanded "Operation Al Mizan," (originally launched in 2002 as an integrated political, military, and economic strategy) in the FATA in September [1](#)2005. As articulated by the DGMO, the objectives of the military operations are to "pursue and eliminate terrorists, deny safehaven, and stabilize the region." To do so, the military has stationed approximately 35,000 XI Corps troops and 14,000 Frontier Corps troops in FATA. (Note: GHQ counts the roughly 28,000 Frontier Corps troops deployed in Balochistan when they say there are 80,000 troops deployed

along the border. End note.) They have also established 227 border posts, 40-50 mobile checkpoints, and stationed 5 infantry battalions of Quick Reaction Forces (QRFs) (2 in South Waziristan and 3 in North Waziristan).

¶4. (S) The 39 operations conducted to date have had varying degrees of success, due to uneven execution and tactical mistakes. Overall, they have led to the capture of 124 militants and the death of 324 (including 76 foreign fighters), according to a GHQ powerpoint presentation passed to the Embassy. In January 2006, Pakistani military officials admitted to US military counterparts that their tactics--repetitive cordon and search operations--were not working and that improperly integrated operations and intelligence and equipment/training shortfalls resulted in several failed operations in late 2005. Pak mil is now attempting to rectify this situation, and the DGMO has reported a few successes of late. Raids in January 2006 led to the apprehension of 13 and the death of 14 "foreign miscreants," according to the DGMO. In April 2006, military spokesmen announced the probable capture or killing of two high value targets in separate operations:

--Muhsin Musa Matawai, an Egyptian national wanted for involvement in the 1998 East African Embassy bombings, captured during a raid in North Waziristan, and

--Marwan Hadid-al Suri, a Syrian national reportedly behind attacks on Pakistani forces and US forces in Eastern Afghanistan, arrested in Bajaur.

Waziristan: From Bad to Worse in 60 Days

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¶5. (C) Despite unprecedented troop and patrol levels, the military's control over law and order South Waziristan remains weak. Militants in South Waziristan--which has been unstable since troops first entered in 2004--continue to harbor foreign fighters, nurture militant clerics, and attack anyone perceived to be "pro-government." Over the past year, 150 pro-government tribesmen (maliks, clerics and others) have been targeted and killed in South Waziristan (Ref A).

¶6. (C) Meanwhile, North Waziristan deteriorated rapidly in December 2005 and early January 2006, worsened in March 2006, and remains beyond government control today (ref B). There is a growing popular perception--reinforced by daily press reporting--that the violence has reached a point beyond the government's ability to re-establish authority (refs B and D). In December 2005 and January 2006, militant clerics--calling themselves Taliban or students of the Qu'ran--launched a "law and order" campaign aimed at driving out the military and imposing their own brand of security in the region (Ref C). Journalists and government officials indicate that the clerics--linked to anti-coalition militants in Afghanistan--have played up collateral civilian casualties and played on the weakness of the political administration and tribal leaders to gain public sympathy. Today, some journalists say the militant clerics have a following of 1500 able to launch daily ambushes, grenade and IED attacks on military patrols and installations in North Waziristan, relegating many troops to their barracks. Since August 2005, 56 soldiers in North Waziristan have been killed.

Comment

¶7. (S) The absence until now of a comprehensive effort to establish strong and responsive political control, law and order, and economic benefits for cooperation mars any successes the GOP can count from Operation Al Mizan. We have pressed this point repeatedly with the Pakistani leadership, and in January, Musharraf began to acknowledge the need for a major policy overhaul in the tribal areas. The government's mid-May revelation of a new strategy for the FATA (ref A) is potentially a major step forward, but the proof will lie in

its implementation.
CROCKER